

In the Claims

Please substitute amended claim 1 for pending claim
1 as follows:

1. (Amended) A method of oxygenating yeast slurry comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a yeast slurry having about 40 g/l yeast to about 80 g/l yeast on a dry weight basis;

(b) passing at least a portion of the yeast slurry through a membrane contactor, the contactor comprising at least one hydrophobic, microporous membrane, the membrane having a liquid side and a gas side, wherein the contactor is connected to an oxygen source, and wherein at least a portion of the yeast slurry is in proximity to the membrane on the liquid side;

(c) delivering oxygen from the oxygen source to the gas side of the membrane under conditions that cause at least a portion of the oxygen to transfer from the gas side of the membrane to the yeast slurry.

Please add the following claim:

--9-- The method of claim 1, wherein the yeast slurry is oxygenated prior to pitching the yeast with a fermentable liquid medium.--